

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



*Cora Campbell, Commissioner*  
*Jeff Regnart, Director*



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#### **SUBDISTRICTS 4-6 COMMERCIAL SALMON OPENINGS**

There will be commercial salmon openings beginning this weekend in Norton Sound Subdistricts 4-6, the Norton Bay, Shaktoolik, and Unalakleet Subdistricts. Norton Sound Subdistricts 5 and 6, the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts, will reopen to commercial salmon fishing for 72 hours from 6:00 p.m. Saturday, July 27, to 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 30. Norton Sound Subdistrict 4, the Norton Bay Subdistrict, will also reopen for 72 hours from 6:00 p.m. Sunday, July 28 to 6:00 Wednesday, July 31. Permit holders in all three subdistricts are limited to 100 fathoms of net and gillnets must have a mesh size of 6 inches or less.

The chum salmon season is winding down throughout Norton Sound and commercial catches of coho salmon could match or exceed chum salmon catches during these next periods. At the start of coho salmon season, the department will use index openings to gauge early run strength with escapement windows between periods. This will ensure some coho salmon reach spawning areas and are available to support inriver subsistence fisheries before more aggressive commercial fishing schedules are established. The fishing schedule of two 48-hour openings per week will not be set for Subdistricts 5 and 6 until coho salmon run strength can be accurately assessed and the North River tower sustainable escapement goal projected to be achieved. Coho salmon conservation concerns are not anticipated this season for southern Norton Sound, and the North River tower-based coho salmon escapement goal has been reached perennially since 2001. In Norton Bay Subdistrict, historical catch statistics will be compared to this year's catch numbers from initial index openings to adjust fishing time in this season.

No commercial salmon openings are expected for Subdistricts 2 and 3, the Golovin and Elim Subdistricts, until August 1. The department is planning to allow brief index periods in Subdistricts 2 and 3 beginning August 1 to gauge early coho salmon run strength. Longer periods or a fishing schedule for Subdistricts 2 and 3 will not be permitted until the Kwiniuk River aerial survey goal of 650-1,300 coho salmon is projected to be reached. In 2012, commercial salmon fishing opportunities were limited until mid-August in Subdistricts 2 and 3 in order to achieve this escapement goal.